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ABSTRACT

Developed as part of a New Jersey project designed to provide assessment and instructional services for adult basic education exceptional learners (see CE 018 884 for the final report of this project), this handbook provides a model of a systematic educational system for adult exceptional learners. The introductory section defines adult exceptional learners as individuals who have had, and continue to have, severe difficulty in learning. The second section focuses on the assessment model developed during the project. An assessment-instructional model is shown, and its five components (assessment, educational planning, implementation, evaluation, and modification) are described. Three assessment techniques (observation, interviews, and testing) are discussed, and a sample checklist and questionnaire are included. The last section is devoted to instructional services and covers the development of individualized educational plans and the implementation of compatible instructional strategies and materials. Among the suggested strategies are the following: (1) secure the learner's cooperation; (2) offer instruction at the learner's level; (3) break tasks into small units; (4) reinforce success; (5) keep learning tasks and materials meaningful; and (6) facilitate remembering. The two appendixes provide a description of assessment instruments and an oral language checklist. A brief bibliography is also included. (ELG)

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

JULY 1978

WORKING WITH ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

A HANDBOOK OF SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT, EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1977-78 year, the Center for Adult Development and the Special Education Curriculum of the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University conducted a project in cooperation with the Adult Learning Center of Plainfield, New Jersey whose aim was to design and implement an educational delivery system to accommodate adults who present severe and unusual learning problems. We have chosen to refer to such individuals as "adult exceptional learners," a term that will be clearer as we proceed through this handbook.

One of the goals of that project was to prepare a handbook that could serve as a resource for persons who work with exceptional adults on a day-to-day basis and which could help them in recognizing, assessing and programming for such learners.

Our project was an exploratory one, insofar as adult learning exceptionality had not been extensively studied in the past. It would be highly presumptuous to imply that after one year's effort, we have learned all there is to know about the adult exceptional learner. On the contrary, what we have done is to take the first step in a long journey that requires a great deal more study, research, and practical application.

What follows is our attempt to synthesize current knowledge and educational practice from both the fields of special education and adult education and to combine it with our first hand experience in working with adult exceptional learners into one model of a systematic educational delivery system.

This handbook is intended for use by a variety of personnel who work with adult exceptional learners regardless of the institutional

context. Its purpose is to present a few guiding principles and to offer some suggestions for practice. Their translation into the operational structure of learning sites such as Adult Learning Centers, Educational Rehabilitation Centers, or Correctional Institutions will require more detail than was possible in this one resource. But, if the philosophy and ideas in this handbook have merit, the procedures for implementing them are bound to follow.

Who are "Adult Exceptional Learners"?

Anyone who has worked with adult in a learning setting has come across some individuals who appear to have such inordinate difficulty with learning that few of the usual approaches seem effective in helping them progress. Almost instinctively one begins to raise questions such as "Is this individual 'mentally retarded'?" "Is he/she 'emotionally disturbed'?" "Does this student have a 'learning disability'?" In raising such questions, we reveal our need to try to organize certain observed behaviors or performances into some type of classification scheme what will increase our understanding of the phenomena. This approach, however, has been found to be of limited value when applied to young atypical learners, and is particularly unwarranted when dealing with adults. Contrary to what one might expect the traditional categories of exceptionality do not designate unitary concepts. Terms such as "mentally retarded," "slow-learners," "socially-maladjusted" do not have clear-cut, agreed upon definitions, nor do they represent a reliable and unambiguous set of descriptors for each category.

There are wide individual differences even within categories. What has been glaringly apparent during the past few years in the field of

special education is that such terms are least descriptive of the behaviors that concern educators most--the individual's learning characteristics, and how he/she learns best. It is generally acknowledged that from the perspective of educational programming, learning characteristics can cut across categorical divisions, and individuals labeled "emotionally disturbed," "mentally retarded," or "learning disabled," have some common characteristics.

Perhaps the most insidious result of labeling individuals is that the label is then used to perpetuate a type of circular reasoning whose effect is to deny service. For example, saying that an individual is "mentally retarded" is not an explanation of behavior, yet it appears to be used when a statement is made that, "He is having difficulty learning because he is mentally retarded."

If the categorical approach is not a valid or educationally useful one, what alternative can be used?

In our project, and in this handbook, we have chosen to dispense with traditional labels and to conceptualize adult exceptional learners as individuals who have had in the past, and continue to have severe and persistent difficulty in learning.

Although adult exceptional learners may be found in any of the organizational divisions of adult education (High School Equivalency, Pre-GED, etc.) it is likely that the largest percentage will be found in Adult Basic Education programs because of their low achievement levels. Our handbook is geared particularly to those individuals in ABE programs who experience serious difficulty in the acquisition and retention of skills related to reading, communication and numerical operations.

Obviously, not all ABE students are exceptional learners. Some students have low achievement levels because they have had insufficient opportunities to learn. Personal or social circumstances made it necessary for them to leave formal schooling before they had enough experience to acquire a functional repertoire of basic skills. Once these individuals return to a directed learning situation, they make good progress, particularly if their motives for entry are related to a specific or important identified goal. They may simply be "undereducated," or have an experience deficit, but, be able to learn given the usual ABE instructional program.

Other ABE students, however, although exhibiting the same low achievement levels upon entry, do so for entirely different reasons. They too may have dropped out of school, but they left either because their experiences were negative, or because schooling was unproductive, or for some complex combination of the two factors (experience defects). The "causes" for poor learning rarely lie solely within the individual, nor can they be attributed entirely to institutional shortcomings, but are more likely to be found within the interactions between the two. Some of those adults might have been considered of "low ability," or "poorly motivated," or, they may have been individuals who had difficulty processing information either perceptionally or conceptually (process dysfunction), but who were never recognized as needing special attention during their years in school.

By the time an exceptional adult returns to a learning situation, so much has occurred between the initial schooling experience and his/her present life situation that it is futile to try to determine specific "causes" for learning problems. At best, perhaps some relationships

between early experience or antecedent events and present learning difficulties might be drawn. What practitioners see in a learning disabled adult is the end product of contributing factors so varied and complex that it may be almost impossible to pinpoint cause and effect relationships.

How then is it possible to work with such learners if all the pertinent psycho-social characteristics cannot be precisely pinpointed? If there are no clear-cut criteria for determing exceptionality, are there any guidelines that can be used by teachers, counselors and other workers who are faced with the responsibility for providing an educational program?

We propose an approach which has sometimes been referred to as the "learning disabilities" approach to exceptional learning problems. It has also been called the "diagnostic-perscriptive" approach. We have chosen to call it the assessment instructional model. Regardless of the specific term used, it is characterized by an emphases on indiv-idualized programming which is based on information about both the learner (learner analysis) and the task or skill to be learned (content analysis). Its objective is to seek the best fit between the learner and the task which can result in an effective learning experience.

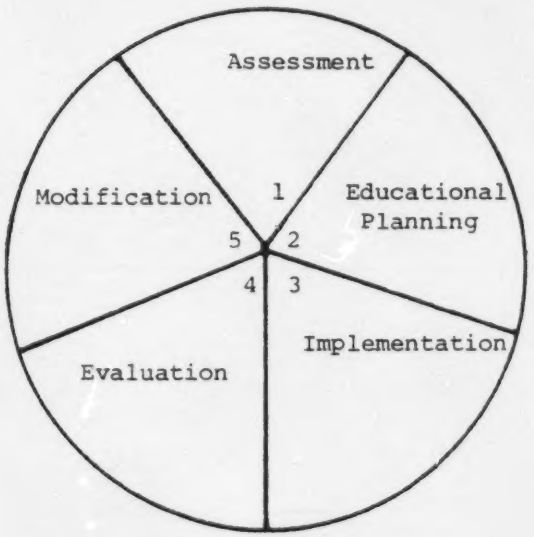
It is an approach which suggests that rather than substituting one label for another ("exceptional" for the more traditional terms) practitioners will learn to deal with such learners using a more behavioral-descriptive approach. The guiding question throughout the teaching-learning process is one that asks, "What do I observe about the way this student learns and what information do I have about his/her performance that can help me to provide an effective instructional program?"

AN ASSESSMENT — INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

Much has been written about the "diagnostic prescriptive" or "clinical teaching model" and its application in learning situations with young exceptional learners. (Lerner, 1976; Payne, Polloway & Smith, 1977; Wallace & Larsen, 1978). While some of the literature on adult learners makes reference to "diagnostic teaching," "individualized programming," and other closely related terms, their translation into practice in adult educational settings has not been well explicated or detailed. For this reason, it might be well to begin this section with a schematic illustration of the Assessment-Instructional Model and then clarify how some of the concepts are used in the present handbook.

ILLUSTRATION H.1

ASSESSMENT — INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL*
(Diagnostic-Prescriptive Cycle)



*This is a modification of the "Clinical Teaching Cycle" as described by Janet W. Lerner in Children With Learning Disabilities. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976.

Assessment (1)

The guiding question through this initial phase is: "What are the behaviors that have been observed, or the performance that has been recorded that laads one to suspect that this individual is an exceptional learner, requiring special programming?"

Assessment refers to the process by which relevant information about an individual is secured using a variety of data gathering techniques including observations, structured interview, standardized test results, and informal test results. The objective of the assessment phase is to compile, organize and interpret whatever cognitive, psycho-social, and attitudinal information appears necessary in order to design an effective instructional program for the individual learner. In this respect it includes not just a quantitative recording of "scores" on given tests, but a qualitative, descriptive accounting of as many facets of development as seem necessary to produce a meaningful educational program. (In a subsequent section each assessment technique will be described and examples given of ways to apply their use to adults.)

Educational Planning (2)

After all the pertinent information has been assembled, the next process requires that it be interpreted for its educational implications. What synthesis can be made of all the findings, and what kind of an educational plan can be devised? How can objectives be designed that are consistent with what has been determined from observations, testing, and interviews? What strengths and weaknesses must be accommodated in the educational plan; what learning modalities; what learning preferences?

What materials and activities can best facilitate learning for this individual? Answering these questions results in what we will call an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

Implementation (3)

After an individual educational plan has been designed, it must be implemented within the organizational context in order to find out whether or not it is appropriate for the individual in question. While the planning stage tries to anticipate all the variables that must be accounted for in the plan, it is only by actually trying to work with it that teacher and student will be able to evaluate its effectiveness. Questions such as: "Was sufficient time planned for acquiring an important sub-skill?", "Was sufficient reinforcement built in?", "Are the materials really appropriate?" can be answered only after the plan has been implemented.

Evaluation (4)

Following the implementation of an individual educational plan, evaluation must become an on-going process. Has the student learned? Have the objectives been met? Evaluative procedures can be either formal (testing) or informal, through observations. If the student has successfully met the objectives as stated in his/her IEP, then the teacher is informed that instruction has been successful and thus would plan the next stage of learning using similar teaching approaches and materials. If the objectives have not been met, an analysis of student errors may be valuable for determining the cause of failure and for planning subsequent teaching objectives.

Modification (5)

Based on the results of on-going evaluation, objectives for instruction may be redesigned, or modified, to make them more appropriate for the individual. It is only through continual student reevaluation and this modification of instructional objectives that the discovery of finding the optimal method of teaching a student can ever be achieved.

The assessment-instructional model presented here has a number of key features that make it different from the usual teaching-learning pattern.

1) Assessment is an on-going procedure. While the initial assessment provides the information to design and "lift-off" an instructional plan, once the plan is started continuing assessment (evaluation) goes on to determine if a student has achieved the objectives specified, or whether modifications in methods or materials are called for. The cyclical nature of the model is operating at all times with each student.
2) Instructional decisions are the responsibility of the teacher based on all the information gathered about the student and how he or she learns. It is not the "material" or a particular "workbook" or series of texts regardless of how good the material might be, that dictates a student's learning plan. Instructional materials are used to support and facilitate the plan, but it is the teacher who designs and manages the plan.
3) Students are an integral part of the process and are consulted and involved in each step. Adult students, regardless of their educational achievement levels, have the right to participate in all decisions that affect them. They help to shape

the decisions rather than simply attend and respond to them passively.

4) Individualized planning while it focuses on the educational needs of the individual does not mean that each learner interacts only with the instructor. Much of what we learn takes place in a social context. While the unique needs of each exceptional learner are emphasized in the assessment-instructional process described in this handbook, grouping for instructional purposes is consistent with its philosophy. It is quite possible to have a group of students, each of whom is working to achieve a similar objective to learn together, using an instructional method that is appropriate to all of them.

TECHNIQUES FOR CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT

Observation

The importance of observing learner behavior has been emphasized in all educational preparation programs, regardless of the learner's age level. However, one of the problems found by teachers of adults is that adults have a much larger repertoire of behaviors than do young children. Therefore, it becomes much more difficult to decide which behaviors are noteworthy, which behaviors bear a meaningful relationship to potential or suspected learning problems.

It is essential to emphasize that observations constitute one of the more qualitative aspects of the assessment process. Some of the behaviors that can be observed readily are those for which there are no formal, or "standardized" testing instruments. When observations are

combined with the information gathered from tests, they can be used to corroborate or to question quantitative findings. Teachers are not the only personnel in adult learning situations who can perform observations. Counselors and supervisors, too, can assist in the observational process, whether it is done informally or by using a behavioral checklist.

What behaviors are important to observe? Some attempt has been made to organize sets of behaviors into checklists that teachers can use for observational purposes.. In one study Needham (1976) compiled a list of behaviors associated with children and adolescents with learning disabilities and asked ABE teachers in Pennsylvania to check those they observed most often in their adult students. Some of the behaviors related to sensory processes, others to cognitive skills, while some focused on behaviors that dealt with affect or the emotions.

The checklist that follows was compiled from Needham's comprehensive list and includes those behaviors ABE teachers checked most frequently as occurring in their students "often" and "sometimes." In using the checklist, a student does not have to exhibit all the behaviors noted before a teacher or counselor might consider that he/she has exceptional learning problems. What proportion is necessary to constitute a serious learning disorder is not yet known. However, the initial observational information combined with subsequent structured interview questions and testing should help make that clearer. There are a number of possible patterns that might emerge from use of such a checklist:

a) Behaviors checked as occurring "often" or "sometimes" in all areas suggesting a diffuse or generalized dysfunctional pattern;

b) Dysfunctional behaviors that cluster in the communication

areas of Reading, Spelling, Speaking, Writing, suggesting a pattern of possible language disorder;

c) Behaviors that center almost exclusively in one area suggesting a "specific" learning disability;

d) Behaviors which point to a possible sensory acuity problem in either vision or hearing;

e) Behaviors checked as occurring "often" relating to emotional state suggesting possible problem with personal adjustment.

BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST *

Have you ever observed any of the following behaviors in your Adult Basic Education students?

	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
WRITING			
1. Size of margin varies widely.			
2. Frequently makes extra strokes in letters m, n, u, w. m m uu			
3. Omits, disfigures or displaces letters in writing from dictation.			
4. Cannot write from dictation: can copy.			
5. Writes slowly.			
6. Printed and longhand letters in same word. Rabbit			
7. Fine motor movement in writing is not smooth.			
SPELLING			
1. Omits silent letters.			
2. Omits word endings.			
3. Omits or displaces final e. Example: mien for mine; noet for note; seal for sale; spok for spoke.			
4. Displaces letters in common words. Example: gril for girl; form for from.			
5. Spells phonetically. Example: etmyer for admire; weat for ate; wheat for wet; refews for refuse; duall for doll.			
6. Repeats spelling errors.			
7. Cannot apply phonetic rules to spelling.			

	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
ARITHMETIC			
1. Cannot comprehend grammatical wording or problem necessary for solution.			
2. Does not recognize problem question.			
3. Not aware of arithmetic errors.			
4. Counts on fingers.			
5. Performs arithmetic adequately; shows deficits in reading and spelling.			
READING			
1. Fear of reading tasks.			
2. Extreme slowness: letter by letter			
3. Frequently loses place on page.			
4. Confuses similar words. Example: took-looked; stream-steam; gear-beer.			
5. Confuses similar letters: dbpq; hnu; tf; NZ; MW; XYK: rhn.			
6. Confuses consonant blends: spr; st; fl; sm; wh.			
7. Difficulty dividing words into syllables.			
8. Difficulty with comprehension. Example: main idea of story.			
9. Can remember narrative stories, but not words or short phrases.			
10. Omits little words; a, an, the.			
11. Substitutes words: "when" for then; "that" for what; "saw" for was; "a" for the; "of" for off; "from" for for.			

*(Adapted with permission from author. R. G. Needham. "Development of Observation Checklist for Identification of Functionally Illiterate ABE Students." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, Pa., 1976.)

READING (con't)	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
12. In reading aloud, jerkness in flow or words.			
13. Has difficulty learning abstract words. Example: invisible, but not words with visual representations. Example: fence.			
14. Has difficulty reading maps.			
15. Has lower reading skills than arithmetic skills.			
SPEAKING			
1. Difficulty in finding appropriate words, names of objects, conditions, or relationships. Example: "ball" a round thing children play with.			
2. Can find correct word when prompted by teacher.			
3. Incorrect use of grammar.			
4. Mispronounces sounds of syllables when speaking.			
5. Is difficult to understand when speaks.			
6. Has difficulty expressing ideas.			
7. Speaks slowly; reduced number of words said per minute.			
8. Omits small one syllable words. Example: a; an; the; etc.			
9. Substitutes necessary words for others of similar structure or meaning. Example: house for home; herbacious for shebacious.			
10. Understands general meaning or phrase; not the meaning of individual words.			
11. Remembers only part of spoken phrase.			
12. Decreased understanding of complex sentences.			

SPEAKING (con't)	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
13. Decreased understanding of narrative speech.			
14. Is hesitant to speak.			
15. Can say and recognize individual sounds but recognition of meaning is greatly impaired.			
16. Uses habitual expressions. Example: let me see...let me see; I know but I can't...I know but I can't.			
THINKING			
1. Cannot understand grammatical relationships in possessive case. Example: the father's brother—the brother's father.			
2. Cannot understand the logic in long sentences.			
3. Problems in logical integration. Example: putting parts together to make a whole.			
4. Concrete thinking: lacks ability to generalize.			
5. Difficulty with abstractions.			
6. Difficulty with similarities.			
7. Difficulty with classification into categories.			
8. Difficulty with logical relationships or analogics.			
9. Lacks insight. Example: unaware of difficulties.			
10. Seems to have average or above intelligence.			
11. Shows better logic in tasks with concrete activities.			

	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
SEEING			
1. Difficulty recognizing missing parts.			
2. Is unaware of mistakes.			
3. Slow in scanning letters of word.			
4. Focuses several times on same line.			
HEARING			
1. Is confused when more than one direction is spoken consecutively.			
HISTORY			
1. Had opportunity to attend school but did not learn.			
2. Failed one or two grades.			

	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
BODY			
1. Becomes tired easily			
EMOTIONS			
1. Is "loner" or shy and retiring.			
2. Has difficulty relating to people.			
3. Short attention span.			
4. Easily distracted.			
5. Poor opinion of himself/herself.			
6. Rigidity-resists changes in routine.			

Structured Interview Questionnaire

In addition to information that a student and teacher, or student and counselor may exchange informally during conversations, another method for securing pertinent information is through a structured interview questionnaire. Such a device permits the interviewer to inquire about areas of life history that might bear a relationship to the student's present learning problem. While some of the questions are posed in a fashion that allows quantification of responses, some questions provide an impressionistic sampling of development as perceived and recalled by the adult. As with any other self-report instrument, the interview questionnaire is subject to the weaknesses of this type of technique. The time lapse between the occurrence of an event and its recall by the individual increases the possibility of inaccuracies, or distortion of data. Interviewer bias may also contaminate responses. But if the questionnaire is used as part of an assessment plan, along with other techniques, then the danger of making decisions based solely on self-report data is minimized.

In the sample below, which is a shortened version of one used in the Rutgers-Plainfield Adult Exceptional Learners Project, four domains of information are sampled. Because of our interest in educational programming, questions were constructed that related to the student's school history and self-perceived difficulties with basic skills areas. Our intention was to discover how the student assessed his/her previous difficulties and what relationship those difficulties might have to present learning problems.

A section on health history was included to examine the possibility of interferences with learning due to physical limitations such as

visual acuity problems, hearing loss, or, as in the case of older adults, the residual effects of cardiovascular, or neurological disease.

A group of questions focus on the learner's adjustment after leaving school in order to gather some idea of employability status. Since vocational adjustment is a central concern in any adult's life, it is important to know how the student has been functioning in this area.

In the last group of questions, the learner is asked about his/her interests. Individuals, even those who have limited academic skills, will have some skills or interests that are motivating and satisfying for them. The unique ness of a learner is often captured in this section, and it highlights the importance of remembering that adult exceptional learners are multidimensional people and may be quite adept at competencies or skills not typically considered as school related kinds of learning. This section is helpful at the time of program planning since activities can be selected and structured around interests in which a student feels some measure of success.

Demographic data has not been included in the example used below since many intake procedures already make provision for securing information such as age, address, previous attendance at other learning centers, etc.

The Interview Questionnaire may be administered by either the counselor or the teacher. What is important to keep in mind is that the student should feel some measure of rapport with the interviewer before being expected to respond to questions about himself/herself in an honest and open manner.

Interview Questionnaire

Student's Name _____

ABE Program _____

Date _____

Recorder _____

DIRECTIONS:

Recorder reads to student:

"I am going to ask you to help me fill out a questionnaire. The information you give will help us to know you a little better so that we can plan a learning program that is right for you.

We are particularly interested in knowing what school was like for you in the past, and how you felt about certain things that went on in school.

I will read each question aloud and will write down what you tell me. If you want to discuss any question, please feel free to do so. Or, if any question is unclear, please tell me, and I will try to explain it."

I. SCHOOL HISTORY

1. What was the last grade that you attended in school?

_____
(Grade)

2. Did you finish that grade?
   (1) _____ Yes
   (2) _____ No

3. Have you ever repeated any grades?
   (1) _____ Yes
   (2) _____ No

4. Why did your schooling end in the _____ grade?
   (Check reasons that affected student's decision to leave school)

		Response-In Quotes
(1) ____	not achieving	_____
(2) ____	asked to leave	_____
(3) ____	Family responsibilities	_____
(4) ____	financial need	_____
(5) ____	preferred to work	_____
(6) ____	other (specify) _____	

5. What subjects did you find hardest to learn when you were in school?
   (1) ____ reading
   (2) ____ communication (spelling, handwriting, written expression)
   (3) ____ math
   (4) ____ other _____
   (specify)

6. If reading mentioned, why do you think reading was hard for you to learn?

_____

_____

7. If communication skills mentioned, why do you think _____ was hard for you to learn?

_____

_____

8. If math mentioned, why do you think math was hard for you to learn?

_____

_____

9. Did you ever receive any special help while you were in school?
   (1) ____ Yes
   (2) ____ No

If Yes

10. What kind(s) of help did you receive?
   (1) ____ remedial reading
   (2) ____ tutoring
   (3) ____ other _____
   (specify)

_____
(comments)

11. Do you have a special reason for coming to the _____ Learning Center?
   (1) ____ Yes
   (2) ____ No

If Yes

12. What is the special reason?

_____

   (1) ____ personal growth or satisfaction
   (2) ____ to enter college
   (3) ____ to keep present job
   (4) ____ to get a better job
   (5) ____ to get High School Equivalence (GED)
   (6) ____ to learn to read and write
   (7) ____ to learn English
   (8) ____ inter agency referral
   (9) ____ life coping skills (help children, get off welfare)
   (10) ____ other _____
   (specify)

Recorder reads to student:

"I am going to ask you about several basic skills and I would like to know if you find them hard or easy." (check degree)

13.

Skill	Degree of Difficulty or Facility: Very Hard/Hard	Neither Hard Nor Easy	Very Easy/Easy
As an adult, how hard or easy is it for you: a) to do work that needs much handwriting.			
b) to learn new words to read.			
c) to understand what you read			
d) to learn to spell words			
e) to figure out math examples			
f) to remember what you heard someone say			
g) to remember things when you have to take a test (Drivers test)			

14. Is there anything that you really disliked about school that made you feel uncomfortable? (For example, teacher, classmates, subjects, rules, etc.)

_____

_____

(Comments)

II. HEALTH HISTORY

Interviewer reads to student:

"I would like to find out about any serious illnesses or accidents you remember having, how old you were and how long the illness or accident lasted."

15. Type of Illness or Accident	16. Age	17. Were you hospitalized? Yes	No
(a) _____	____	(1) ____	(2) ____
(b) _____	____	(1) ____	(2) ____
(c) _____	____	(1) ____	(2) ____
(d) _____	____	(1) ____	(2) ____

_____

(Comments)

18. Have you ever had your eyes examined?

(1) ____ Yes
(2) ____ No

If Yes

19. What were you told?

_____

20. Have you ever had your hearing tested?
(1) ____ Yes
(2) ____ No

If Yes
21. What were you told?

_____

22. Do you have any health problem now that interferes with your learning?

_____

III. POST SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT

23. What have you done since leaving school?

_____

_____

24. What is your job status?
(1) _____ Working full-time (35 or more hours/wk)
(2) _____ Working part-time (fewer than 35 hrs/wk)
(3) _____ Unemployed
(4) _____ Retired
(5) _____ Homemaker
(6) _____ Other _____
Explain

If employed
25. What is your job title or position? _____

If unemployed
26. What was your last job title or position? _____

27. Are you looking for work now?
(1) ____ Yes
(2) ____ No

IV. INTERESTS
28. Do you spend any time reading outside of class?
(1) ____ Yes
(2) ____ No

29. What kinds of things do you enjoy reading? (Probe: newspapers, magazines, etc.)
(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(Specify names)

30. Do you have any hobbies or special skills? (For example: fixing radios, sewing, cooking special food, painting)
(1) ____ Yes Please list _____
_____
(2) ____ No

Testing

So many abuses have been associated with testing and its application in the educational setting that it might be well to clarify some terms. Testing has been defined as, ". . . the controlled observation of the behavior of an individual to whom stimuli of known characteristics are applied in a known manner (Newland, 1963, p. 471) It is important to emphasize that testing is but one of a number of techniques used for assessment purposes. There are many types of tests for measuring and evaluating performance in a variety of human characteristics and behaviors. We will be concentrating here on those testing instruments that are most appropriate for use in an educational setting for evaluating adult performance.

Perhaps the most widely known tests are those called "standardized" or "norm-referenced" tests. Standardized tests measure performance in the characteristic or traits under consideration in samples of the population and then report some measure of central tendency (mean, or average, mode, median, etc.) for those samples. When one uses such tests, the question that one wants to answer is: "To what extent does this individual deviate from the reference group to which he/she is being compared?" This process is called looking at inter-individual variability. There are standarized tests commercially available for measuring achievement, personality, aptitudes, etc. But, a major complicating factor in using standardized instruments with adults, and exceptional adults in particular, is that few of the tests have been normed on large samples of adults of various ages to make the norms useful in working with such groups.

One of the common misinterpretations made of standardized tests is

to assume that they reveal much more about the person than they actually do. Even a widely recognized and respected test such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) provides only an estimate of general ability in school related learning, reasoning and problem solving. This so-called general ability test samples only a small part of the totality of adult competence, and provides little, if any, information about the individual's social effectiveness, persistence, flexibility, adjustment to change, or other important characteristics.

Some tests such as the WAIS require trained examiners and would not typically be administered in adult learning centers unless a psychologist was part of the staff. What is more likely to be part of the assessment (or intake) procedures at adult learning settings is the administration of standardized achievement measures. A number of such tests are available for adults and are used to establish levels of achievement in basic skills areas. Among the most widely used are the TABE series and the ABLE.

Using group comparisons, especially for individuals about whom there is little normative information, has been critized by many educators. Recently, a type of test has been developed that does not use group norms, but sets a specific performance standard (criterion) for each student which is unique to that individual. Judgments about a learner are made relative to his/her own strengths and weaknesses (intra-individual assessment) rather than comparisons to a norm group. Test items are related to a set of objectives derived from particular content areas. This type of test makes it possible to conduct continuous progress assessment. Examples of some criterion - referenced measures are the APL Survey (American College Testing Program, 1976), and the Reading/

Everyday Activities in Life (R/EAL, 1972).

When information is needed that cannot be provided by standardized tests, or when information is desired that extends the findings of formal tests, then informal or teacher-made tests can be used. While informal tests do not need to meet the standards of formal test construction, the content must be selected and arranged to reflect the logical sequence of the body of knowledge, or skill acquisition being measured. The advantage of informal tests is that they are useful in continuous assessment since they can focus on specific skills (knowledge of prefixes in reading, borrowing in subtraction, etc.). Informal tests can help chart the achievement of objectives, and identify the next set of objectives to be planned.

Diagnostic testing refers to that level of testing which attempts to analyze performance in specific sub-skills of a given body of content. For example, a student's performance on a reading achievement test might be reported in terms of a total score, such as a grade equivalent, or a percentile. The test might also report performance on sub-sets of reading performance such as "word recognition", and "paragraph meaning." But, in order to know how a student performed in the specific skills that comprise word recognition, one would need to move to the diagnostic level. Strengths and weaknesses within a particular area can be pinpointed and patterns identified that have implications for instructional planning.

Some diagnostic tests are commercially available, while others can be teacher-prepared. A few reading diagnostic measures require training in administration and interpretation, but more and more diagnostic

tests are being produced with the practitioner in mind, and which do not require extensive pre-training.

Another function of "diagnostic" testing which may be accomplished either through a formal instrument or by informal testing is assessment of related learning processes. Individuals vary in the way they process information for learning. There are individual preferences as well as particular strengths and weaknesses in the way people receive information, in the way they make association for retaining information in memory, and in the way they express what they have learned. The multitude of cognitive processes connected with perception, conceptualization, and expression are being studied in young children, and to some extent with adults. It is a highly specialized area, but one which will have implication for practitioners who attempt to find the best routes of instruction for adults who have been unsuccessful with learning in the past.

Regardless of what types of assessment instruments are chosen for use with adults exceptional learners, these points should be emphasized. First, no instrument should be selected unless the objective or purpose for using it has been considered. That is, it should fit into, or serve as part of a "plan" of assessment. Secondly, it is important to read carefully all printed materials that accompany tests to note any limitations that publishers stipulate for the instrument's use. Of course, test manuals containing directions for administration, scoring and interpretation should be thoroughly reviewed before attempting to use the test. Thirdly, it is good practice to have another colleague or a supervisor check over results to make sure the instruments have been used according to suggested procedures.

ASSESSMENT

Before suggesting specific instruments that could be used in assessing adult exceptional learners, it is essential to point out that while the suggestions made here were selected from those procedures used in the Rutgers-Plainfield project, they are by no means the only ones that might be used. Adult assessment is an area that is still being studied by a number of people throughout the country, and other suggestions should be forthcoming at a later time.

It should also be noted that the assessment plan used in the project was based on the goal of assessing domains of behavior considered pertinent to the concepts we were studying (experience deficit, experience defect, process dysfunction). Instruments were selected that translated those concepts into observable and measurable terms.

The Chart on the following page is arranged according to objectives for assessment and the techniques and instruments that might be used.

CHART H.1

ASSESSMENT-ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Objective	Behavioral Domain	Assessment Technique	Suggested Instruments
To determine harmful or negative early experiences which might have contributed to the learning handicaps.	Early school related experiences Affective-social relationships	Informal conversation Interview questionnaire Testing	Structured Interview Questionnaire *Self-Esteem Scale
To determine limitations in previous learning experiences.	Achievement in school related basic skills areas	Observations, Achievement testing, and Diagnostic testing in Reading, Communication, Skills, Arithmetic	*Individual Reading Placement Inventory *ABLE-Level I-Spelling Sub-test *Oral Language Observation Checklist *Ayres Scale for handwriting *Independent writing sample *ABLE-Level I Arithmetic sub-test *(Handbook Appendix AA gives a brief description of each instrument.)
	Post-school adjustment Interests		Structured Interview Questionnaire
To determine dysfunctions in psychological processes related to learning (Receptive, memory, and expression processes	Health, history Attention Perception in auditory and visual modality Motor expression	Observation Interview Process testing	Structured Interview Questionnaire *Visual Perceptual Tasks-Cyzyk Pre-Reading Inventory *Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitudes Subtests: 9, 12, 13, 18 {Visual attention Auditory Attention Visual-motor ability auditory-motor ability *(Handbook Appendix AA gives a brief description of each instrument.)

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Developing an Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

The overriding purpose of any assessment is to identify the instructional goals and related objectives, activities and materials that will maximize learning for the individual under consideration. To achieve this outcome, findings from a variety of assessment techniques must be summarized, interpreted and synthesized into an individual educational plan. The plan must be written in a form that is feasible for on-going management by the teacher.

There are a series of steps to be followed in developing an IEP. One way to illustrate each step is to use case material and follow one adult through from entry into the Center through the development and implementation of his IEP. In this fashion it will be possible to discuss the decisions that were made in arriving at certain objectives and activities for one individual.

Student: M.C. (male)

Age: 18 years, 1 month

Date of Entry at Center: 12/77

M. C. was interviewed by the counselor at the Center and given the Locator test of the TABE which is part of the usual intake procedures of the Plainfield Learning Center. He was found to be "functionally illiterate" and was placed in one of the ABE programs. Because of his extremely low reading achievement he was considered to be a potential "exceptional learner" and was asked to participate in the Rutgers project.

A member of the Rutgers project staff spoke to M. C. informally and then followed with the Structured Interview Questionnaire. During subsequent

sessions, M. C. was given the remaining assessment instruments. After the assessment was completed the results were recorded on a Summary form, and analyzed for developing objectives and instructional activities. The completed IEP was discussed with M. C. and his teacher at a conference and changes or suggestions that came out of the conference were incorporated into the plan.

By using a series of guiding questions we will review the results of each assessment techniques and look at its implications for educational programming.

Question: Was there any information from the Structured Interview Questionnaire sections on School History, Health, Post-School Adjustment and Interests that bear a relationship to M. C.'s present learning handicap?

M. C. reported that last year he was "asked to leave" the high school he had been attending although he was still only in 9th grade. He had been retained twice during his school career, and he recalled having great difficulty as a youngster in elementary school with reading, spelling, arithmetic and handwriting. He also remembered that "sounding out words" was hard, and that word problems in math were difficult because he could not read. He would stay home from school on days when tests were being given because he feared he would not do well. He also recalled that some attempt had been made to help him by providing "remedial reading" during his early school years.

(Obviously, M. C.'s learning difficulties are long standing ones, and have persisted throughout the course of his school career. His severe reading problem is still evident despite any previous

attempts to teach him to read.)

M. C. reported that he had fallen from a 3rd story window at the age of three and had injured his head. He recalled that his family thought it was a "miracle" that he had lived. Results of a recent physical did not indicate any current health problems, and vision and hearing were reported to be good.

(M.C.'s head injury might have contributed to his present learning problem, but in the absence of any firm medical data on residual effects, only an inference can be drawn about possible after effects. Whether it was "causative" is something about which there is insufficient information. Current physical status is favorable and there are no obvious physical interferences such as poor vision or hearing.)

After dropping out of high school, M. C. was able to get a job working full time as a machine operator.

(Post school adjustment appears favorable since despite his problems in basic learning skills, M. C. has other competencies which make him employable.)

M. C.'s main recreational interest centers around the martial arts (Kung Fu). His reason for coming to the Center is to learn to read so that he can read magazines such as Martial Arts. He also enjoys "working out" physically. He watches T. V. and prefers comedy and adventure series.

(M. C.'s interests provide the clue to his motivation in coming to a learning center. His deficiency in reading is an obstacle to maximizing his knowledge of a recreational interest in the martial arts.)

Question: What were the results of M. C.'s assessment in basic skills areas of reading, communication skills and arithmetic?

Reading (Individual Reading Placement Inventory)

Word Recognition- 1.0 grade equivalent

Comprehension- 2.0 grade equivalent

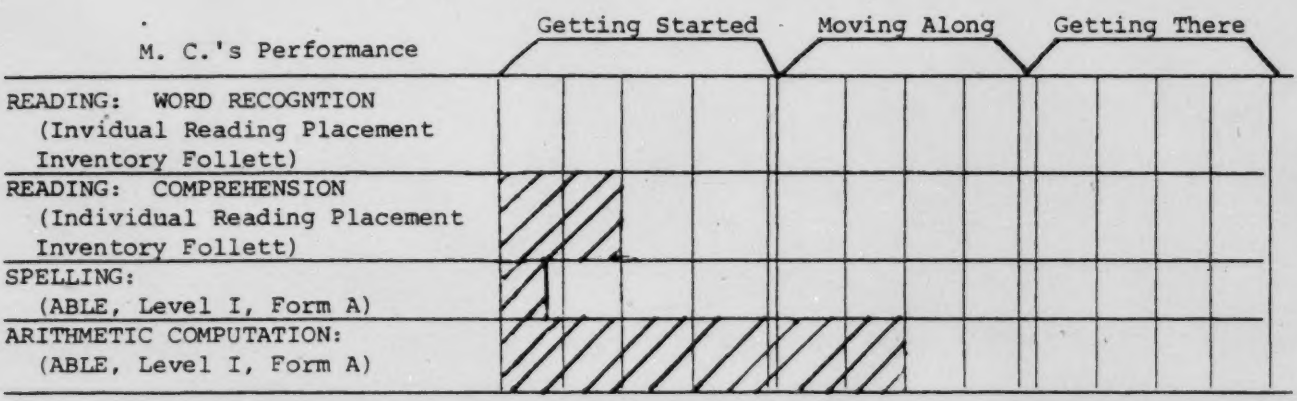
Spelling (ABLE-Level I Form A) 1.4 grade equivalent

Arithmetic computation (ABLE-Level I Form A) 4.0 grade equivalent

In the Rutgers-Plainfield project a chart was used to demonstrate to the student his/her relative performance in the basic skills areas. Since use of grade equivalents, particularly when they are likely to be low, could be potentially discouraging, the chart was segmented into three parts, "Getting Started," "Moving Along," and "Getting There" and which were equivalent to grades 1.0-3.0; 3.0-5.0; and 5.0-7.0. Although the grade equivalents were not shown on the chart teachers were aware of the interpretation.

"M. C.'s" basic skills assessment chart follows:

CHART H.2
SAMPLE IEP BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT


M. C.'s Performance
Getting Started
Moving Along
Getting There
READING: WORD RECOGNTION (Invidual Reading Placement Inventory Follett)
READING: COMPREHENSION (Individual Reading Placement Inventory Follett)
SPELLING: (ABLE, Level I, Form A)
ARITHMETIC COMPUTATION: (ABLE, Level I, Form A)

Diagnostic Analysis: M. C. demonstrated almost no word attack skills in reading. He tried to recall words by "sight," but confused words of similar configuration ("write" for white"). Despite excessive word recognition difficulties, he managed to get meaning from what he read.

Spelling words were usually started correctly, ("go" for gold, "ab" for about) but beyond that, letters were either omitted completely or others substituted ("upst" for upstairs; "childn" for children.)

M. C. used manuscript letter forms for writing. Spacing was uneven and some letters were poorly formed.

M. C.'s oral language contained a number of habitual or nervous expressions. He appeared uneasy in expressing himself orally and spoke with a slight hesitation.

Written expression was so difficult that M. C. would not even attempt the independent writing sample. He dictated a "story" to the interviewer which consisted of a series of short statements listing items he observed in the stimulus picture.

Performance in arithmetic computation was relatively stronger than the language areas. He demonstrated adequate skills in basic addition and subtraction operations. In multiplication he could multiply only by a one digit multiplier. He did not attempt problems that required the division operation.

(The diagnostic analysis provides clues about the priority areas for developing objectives. For M. C. the reading (word recognition) problems are such that despite his years in school, he has acquired virtually no functional decoding skills.)

Question: What strengths and weaknesses were noted in related

learning processes that have implication for educational planning?

Auditory discrimination: M. C. could discriminate all initial consonant sounds and long vowel sounds;
He confused sounds of short vowels (a, e, i, u, o), word endings, and initial blends and diagraphs.

Auditory memory: Results of Detroit showed M. C. to be substantially below adult norms.

Auditory motor: Inadequate; was unable to score on Detroit.

Visual Discrimination: Some letter form confusion noted on the Cyzyk sub-test.

Visual Memory: Poor; substantially below adult norms on Detroit

Visual Motor: Adequate; reached ceiling on Detroit sub-test.

(Although it cannot be said that M. C. demonstrated obvious strength in visual processes, the visual mode appears relatively stronger. Auditory discrimination problems and problems with recall of auditory material corroborate his persistent difficulty in making sound-symbol associations in reading. In view of his weakness in auditory processes, it is inadvisable to focus instruction through a phonic approach.)

Developing Instructional Plan

The next step in the process would be to design an educational plan for "M. C." that incorporates the pertinent assessment findings about his strengths and weaknesses and translates them into a meaningful program. There are two additional factors that must be considered and

incorporated into the educational plan. First, since all students do not spend the same amount of time at the learning site, it is important to know how many hours a student anticipates that he/she will attend each week. This information is helpful to the teacher for scheduling and planning purposes, but also is helpful in arriving at priorities, given constraints of time. Exceptional learners often exhibit so many needs that a question arises about what objectives should be dealt with first. A second factor that relates to establishing priorities in instructional objectives is the student's expressed reason for coming to the learning center. If the individual has a particular goal, then that goal must be incorporated and reflected in setting priorities in instructional planning.

In the case used for illustration, "M. C." was planning to attend for one hour each day, or a total of 5 hours per week. It is not unusual to encounter problems of attendance with ABE students, particularly those with serious and persistent learning problems. The reasons are numerous, and well known to practitioners who have worked with this population group. It would be unrealistic to expect dramatic changes in long-established habit patterns even if outwardly the student expresses a desire to substitute a more systematic attendance pattern. M. C.'s actual attendance during the three month period between the beginning of February and the end of April was a total of 26½ hours. A combination of illness and inclement weather during February interfered with M. C.'s maintaining regular attendance.

Because M. C. continuously expressed a desire to "learn to read better," his educational plan suggested that a major portion of his

time at the Center be spent in reading activities. It was also proposed that if M. C. agreed, some small portion of his time each week could be spent on improving arithmetic computation skills.

Since M. C. had needs in all communication skills, an integrated language experience approach was suggested as appropriate for incorporating reading, spelling, and writing activities and centering them around his interest in the martial arts.

The following chart gives a brief example of how objectives were written and sequenced in "communication skills" and "arithmetic computation" for M. C., and their subsequent translation into learning activities. (Although some attempt was made to write objectives in "behavioral objective" style, most did not meet the standards of describing the terminal behavior, noting the conditions, and stipulating the evaluative criteria. In most cases, only the expected terminal behavior was stipulated with the "learning activities" section providing the "conditions.") The teacher notes in the column headed "starting and ending date" the estimated time span for presentation of each activity. Following that span, evaluation results are noted in "objective achieved" or in "objective not achieved" columns. The last section provides room for teacher comments regarding any student behavior observed during that learning episode that seems noteworthy.

CHART H.3

SAMPLE IEP OBJECTIVES/LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION— RUTGERS UNVIERSITY

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: M. C. Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resources	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
1.0 Communication Skills 1.1 M. C. will increase sight vocabulary by 50% from baseline on the McMenemy Functional Literacy List. 1.2 M. C. will be able to write & spell correctly words he can read from the Functional Literacy List. 1.3 M. C. will be able to construct & write sentences using words from Functional Literacy List.	Objectives 1.1-1.3 (a) Establish M. C.'s baseline through assessment on first 500 words (b) Select from those he does not recognize and construct lists of words each organizing around some common elements (words with short vowels, long vowels +e, words with endings, particularly s,ed,ing,er.) (c) Use color coding to highlight the element that requires attention. Use a multi-modal approach. M. C. needs to hear, see, and write in order to help him retain. (d) Have M. C. use words in meaningful sentences which he dictates to the teacher. (e) M. C. will read the sentences and then write them himself. (Emphasize legible handwriting).				

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION—RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: M. C. Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resources	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
	(f) Each of his sentences or short paragraphs should be kept in a notebook and reviewed frequently. Resources: Card file — 500 words color coded. Notebook with sentences Manuscript & letter forms.				
1.4 M. C. will be able to distinguish the difference between sounds through growth in auditory discrimination skills.	Objective 1.4 Since M. C. is able to distinguish initial sounds and long vowel sounds, concentrate on auditory discrimination activities that require him to distinguish short vowel sounds, word endings, and initial consonant blends and digraphs. Resources: Decoding/Instructional kit (Hoffman Educational Systems) Patterns, Sounds and Meanings (Allyn & Bacon)				

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION— RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: M. C. Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resources	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
Math: Objectives Computation 2.0 M. C. will be able to perform addition operations accurately with 3 & 4 digit addends with carrying. 3.0 M. C. will be able to multiply 3 digit numerals by 3 digit multipliers. 3.1 Will be able to recall multiplication facts for 1-9. 3.2 Will multiply 2 digit numerals by 2 digit multiplier. 3.3 Will multiply using 3 digit multiplier. 4.0 M. C. will be able to divide by multi-digit divisors. 4.1 Will divide using 1 digit division of whole numbers 4.2 Will divide by a 1 digit divisor with regrouping 4.3 Will divide by a 2 digit divisor.	Objective 2.0 Have M. C. review basic addition facts & concept of carrying. Explain the concept of checking addition examples by adding "up" the columns. Have M. C. locate his own errors. Objectives 3.0-4.3 Introduce each objective through oral guided instruction until M. C. has acquired the concept. Have him continue independently until he indicates that he feels he has mastered it. Have M. C. chart his own progress from any evaluative measures. Practice Materials: 1. Computational Skill Development Kit. 2. Programmed Math Series For division process begin with concrete materials to demonstrate separation into sets.				

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Even with the rather limited amount of time "M. C." was available for instruction, post testing showed that he had improved in the three areas in which objectives were specified and instruction gives (word recognition, spelling and arithmetic computation) He scored at a 2.0 grade equivalent in word recognition, an improvement of one grade equivalent, spelling increased from 1.4 grade equivalent to 1.6 and arithmetic computation increased from 4.1 to 4.4.

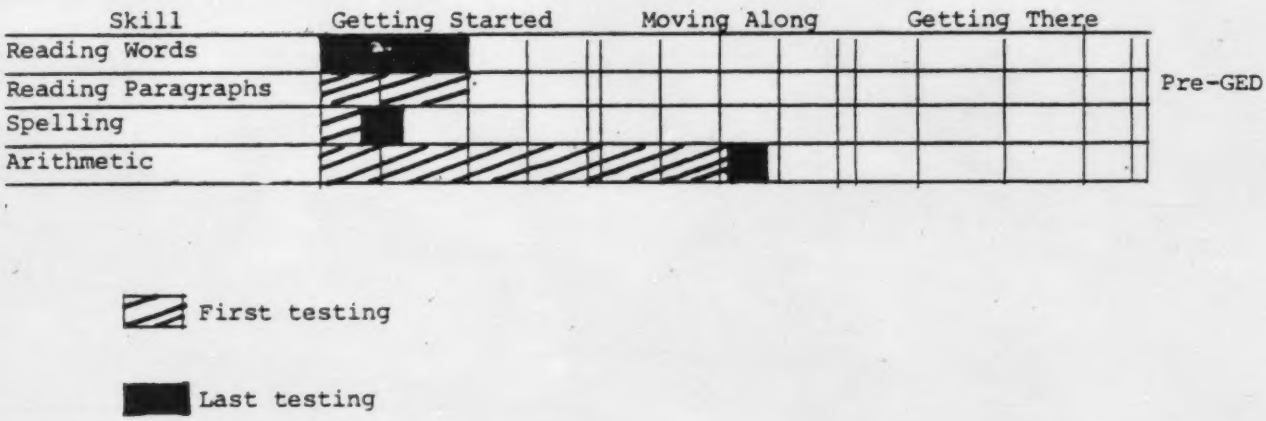
The chart below illustrates "M. C.'s" improvement.

CHART H.4

SAMPLE IEP IMPROVEMENT

Student's Name "M. C." April 1978

Teacher S. H.



The following case of "J. L." is included in order to illustrate a complete Individual Educational Plan on the forms that were used in the Rutgers - Plainfield project.

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION—RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: "J. L." Age: 20 yrs. 5 mos. B.D. 7/8/57

Date: 11/28/77 Center: Plainfield - day - attends 6 hrs. per wk.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Background Information:

"J. L." lives at home with his parents and two younger sisters. "Hungarian is spoken at home by J's parents."

"J. L." finished grade 11. His goal now is to obtain a high school equivalency diploma. He spent 4 years in Hungary (left the U.S. after grade 3 and was placed in grade 6 when he returned). English has been the hardest subject for "J. L." He received remedial reading instruction in grades 7 to 9 and tutoring while in Europe. As an adult he still finds it hard to read unfamiliar words, and to derive meaning form what he reads.

His eyes were examined 7 years ago and no glasses were prescribed.* His hearing was checked 2 years ago and hearing was good. A physical exam in September, 1977 indicated good health.

(* "J" claims to have had eye problems as a child - a weak muscle "caused by too much T.V. watching".)

"J" left school last spring and started at the learning center in Sept. He is unemployed and has never held a job.

"J" participates in bike racing; enjoys clea ning and fixing his car, and watching T.V. He reads for about 1 1/2 hrs. per day & enjoys

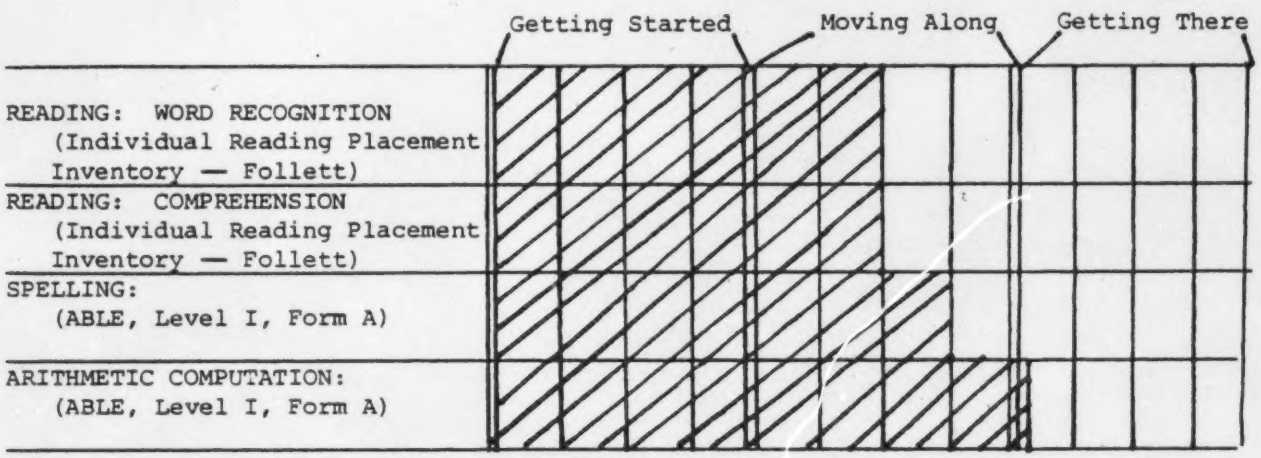
ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION—RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: "J.L." Date: 11/28/77

car magazines.

He responded to questionnaire items with difficulty. "J" seemed to have difficulty responding to complex sentences. His rate of speech was sometimes slow and he seemed to have trouble retrieving the word he wanted to use.

Basic Skills Assessment


Getting Started
Moving Along
Getting There
READING: WORD RECOGNITION (Individual Reading Placement Inventory — Follett)
READING: COMPREHENSION (Individual Reading Placement Inventory — Follett)
SPELLING: (ABLE, Level I, Form A)
ARITHMETIC COMPUTATION: (ABLE, Level I, Form A)

Diagnostic Analysis

Reading - Word Recognition Level IV

Does not use phonetic analysis - guesses by general form of word. ("think" for thing, "worth" for wreath)

Confuses long and short vowels

Confuses little words ("Form" for from; "these" for those)

Difficulty with blends and digraphs

- Comprehension Level IV

Improper phrasing for meaning; long pauses between sentences, but comprehension adequate through level IV.

Name: "J. L." Date: 11/28/77

Diagnostic Analysis

Spelling Level 5

1. Spells some words as he pronounces them: "chirdren" for children; "upsears" for upstairs
2. Omits ending sounds: "thorgh" for thought
3. Omits silent letters: "els" for else
4. Incorrect sounds: "agian" for again

Handwriting Speed: adequate

Legible but somewhat small with same poor letter formation; some inaccuracy in near point copying.

Oral and Written Expression

Written expression: Production is adequate; needs help in stylistic aspects. For example, run-on sentences were prevalent.

Arithmetic (Computation) Level 5.6

Confident- attempted all problems

1. Minor computation errors in addition and subtraction on 2 problems.
2. Difficulty multiplying with zeros; check multiplication facts.
3. Errors in division with 2 digit divisors.

Name: "J. L." Date: 11/28/77

Related Learning Processes

Auditory Discrimination

confuses: Short vowels - u-e;
Long vowels - u-a, i-a;
Initial blends & diagraphs - ch, cr, sl, st, fr, tr, sh, st, sl, fl, gl, gr, sm, sn.

Visual Discrimination:

Adequate

Auditory Memory:

Very limited recall of verbal material. (Approx. 13 yrs. below adult norms)

Visual Memory;

Adequate recall of objects

Auditory Motor:

Low score on Detroit - approx. 10 yrs. below adult norms.

Visual Motor:

Good reproduction of designs.

Summary for Educational Planning

"J's" early school career was interrupted by a move to Hungary where he spent four years. Hungarian is still the primary language spoken in the home. After his return to the U.S., "J" continued to experience difficulty with learning, particularly with reading and oral language. Medical history was unremarkable, except for a possible eye problem as a child. Recent physical examination did not identify any present vision or hearing difficulty. "J" received remedial help in reading for two years in Junior High School. Despite this, he seems to have acquired few, if any, dependable word recognition

Name: "J. L." Date: 11/28/77

skills for decoding unfamiliar words. He depends mainly on general configuration. "J's" visual processing abilities appear to be stronger than auditory, which may account in part for his inability to have acquired reliable phonetic analysis skills.

It is unclear whether "J's" difficulty with communication skills is the result of a "second language" interference, or whether it is rooted in a language processing problem that might have been exacerbated by the second language demands.

The long term goal for "J" is to have him gain competency sufficient to qualify him for entry into the GED program. Short term objectives will emphasize skill acquisition in reading, both word recognition and comprehension skills (approximately grade 4 level.) Objectives in math will focus on multipliers, and division computation using two digit divisors.

In order to find out more about the specific nature of "J's" language problem, a part of his instructional time each week should be spent in a format which consists of the teacher asking questions to which "J" must give an oral response. The purpose is to determine if "J" can respond to questions requiring factual or literal information, whether he can give conclusions, inferences, make predictions (higher order language comprehension processes.) This approach might begin with use of "J's" expressed interests (bike racing, car mechanics), as the topic of discussion, and gradually move to less personalized topics.

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION—RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: "J.L" Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resources	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
Reading: Word Recognition 1.0 "J" will acquire word recognition skills that he can apply to decode unfamiliar words. 1.1 Make sound-symbol associations for all initial blends and diagraphs. 1.2 Distinguish between long and short vowels sounds in words heard orally. 1.3 Recognize syllablic units in words through structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, root words).	For objectives 1.0-1.3 Heighten perception of auditory elements through coordination of auditory discrimination activities with visual patterns: a. assign "key" words for blends and diagraphs. b. use familiar objects to develop associations for short vowel sounds. c. focus on the number and order of sounds in words (beginning middle, or final differences). d. dictate words with short vowel in medial position, blends at the beginning for "J" to write. Suggested Materials: 1. Decoding/Instructional Kit, Hoffman Educational Systems 2. Continental Press-Kit B 3. Patterns, Sounds and Meanings Allyn & Bacon				

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION - RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name "J. L. Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resourses	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
Reading: Comprehension 2.0 "J" will increase reading comprehension skills through: 2.1 Identifying the main idea of a selection. 2.2 Identifying supporting details. 2.3 Classification skills. 2.4 Following directions. 2.5 Perceiving cause and effect relationships.	(Objectives 2.0-2.5) Explain and demonstrate techniques for increasing understanding of what is read (finding key sentences; distinguishing between essential and non-essential details; arranging ideas in sequential order, etc.). Ask questions of the "who", "what" "where", "when" type to elicit details. Relate details to the main idea. Ask "why" questions to help "J" perceive cause and effect relationships. Suggested Materials: Specific Skill Builders Be a Better Reader Practice in Survival Reading				

ADULT EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS PROJECT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION - RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Name: "J. L." Center: Plainfield

Objectives	Learning Activities and Resources	Starting and Ending Date	Objectives Achieved	Objectives Not Achieved	Comments
Math 3.0 "J" will demonstrate skill in multiplications computation through: 3.1 Multiplication of two digit multipliers. 3.2 Multiplication of three digit numerals by three digit multipliers. 4.0 "J" will extend his skill in computation through: 4.1 Division of three digit numerals by two digit divisors. 4.2 Using multiplication to check accuracy to division operation.	Objectives 3.0-4.2 For both computation operations (multiplication & division) present "J" with a problem and have him do it aloud. Identify the step(s) at which he falters and give him guided practice until he understands the process. Provide practice materials with a self-checking device so he can get immediate feedback on the accuracy of his work. Suggested Materials: Computational Skill Development Kit Programmed Math Series-Sullivan				

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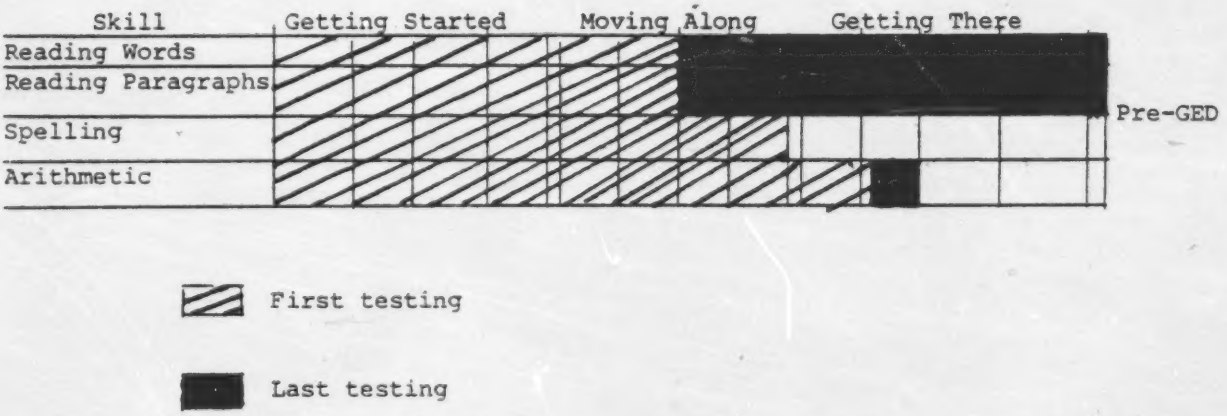
"J. L." attended the Plainfield Adult Learning Center for approximately 36 hours during the period between the beginning of December and the end of April. Post testing showed that "J. L." had improved in the areas of reading and arithmetic. He scored at a 7.0 grade equivalent in both word recognition and reading comprehension, an improvement of three grade levels in each. In arithmetic computation he increased from 5.6 grade equivalent to 6.0.

Student's Name "J. L."

Teacher S. H.



IMPLEMENTATION

While we have presented one example of a format that could be used for recording and managing an educational plan, the design could be modified to suit particular settings or operating procedures.

Once the plan has been shared with the student and he/she is familiar with its general outline, the teacher will assume the major responsibility for its implementation. The actual time for presentation

of tasks, the materials used, the pacing, the need for review are decisions that are made by the teacher based on observation of student behavior. Certain aspects of any plan can be evaluated only after one begins to put it into operation. The teacher may determine that the anticipated time for completion of certain objectives has been underestimated, or possibly over-estimated. Motivational factors are difficult to assess accurately, and there may be fluctuations in this variable that will make it possible for some students to move through their plan at a much faster rate than others.

Instructional Strategies

A number of suggestions have been proposed by Otto, McMenemy, and Smith (1973, Pg. 55-58) for teachers who work with learning disabled children. Some of their suggestions with modifications, are equally appliable to working with adult exceptional learners.

]. Secure the learner's cooperation : If all adult exceptional students were "eager," "willing to learn," "highly motivated," then they would be easier to reach, regardless of their low achievement levels, or the severity of their learning problems. But, as instructors who have worked in adult centers have discovered, most exceptional learners will not fit that description. More typically, they are the ones most easily discouraged, the ones most vulnerable to all kinds of outside influences that disrupt their lives, the ones who need the most supportive teacher - learner interaction.

How can teachers engage a learner who has not established "study" habits that are almost automatic for most learners? First, it might be helpful to review here the factors that are part of motivation.

Attention is the first process that needs to be activated. The student needs to learn how to focus his/her senses and mental activity on the objects, the interactions or the ideas that are part of the task. This process gradually leads to involvement in which the individual begins trying to do such things as imitate, accept or reject, interpret, rearrange, predict, or any number of other cognitive processes. From involvement, interest develops, the desire to continue and repeat involvement in an activity or an experience. It is important to point out that teachers cannot "motivate" learners; motivation comes from within the individual. What teachers can do is set up the conditions for learning that can help students develop the motivation to achieve.

The personal interaction between the learner and the instructor can do much to facilitate or inhibit the learning process. People who choose to work with exceptional learners should transmit an attitude of hope, a belief that the student can learn, can move closer to his/her goal. Some of the attributes that have been identified as fostering the helping relationship between student and teacher are empathy, trust, and honesty. Teachers are empathetic when they can transmit to students the feeling that they understand what the student is experiencing, they can see how things appear from the student's perspective. Trust is developed from behaviors that demonstrate to the student that another individual truly cares about what happens to him/her. Interactions between student and teacher should be open and honest. Adults are not fooled by false praise, or insincere feedback. They need and want honest appraisal, but transmitted in a manner that does not damage their desire to keep trying.

2. Offer instruction at the learner's level: One of the advantages of a systematic assessment - instructional system is that it increases the probability that the learning activities selected will match the readiness level of the student. "Level" in this case refers not merely to gross segments such as "grade level," but to specific skills and sub-skills in content areas. A question teachers should ask themselves when trying to decide on the appropriateness of a task is: Are there pre-requisite skills that comprise this task which this student has not yet learned?" If so, it might be well to provide instruction on the pre-requisites first.

Even with the most precise diagnostic assessment, teachers may still experience some doubt about exactly the right place to start. A good rule of thumb is to aim for a high success rate initially; some have suggested as high as 95%. As the student gains confidence in his/her ability to deal with the new learning, more ambiguity can be introduced.

3. Take small steps: In working with exceptional students, teachers often will be applying a well-established learning principle - successive approximations to the desired goal. They will break tasks down into small, manageable segments that can be completed with success. Sometimes these segments will appear so minute that the "goal" or purpose may be lost sight of. It is important to keep pointing out how each little step fits into the over-all objective, and beyond, how it relates to the student's long range goal.

Programmed materials are examples of materials whose design has been based on this learning principle. Few would dispute the contributions programmed materials have made in adult learning. However, the exclusive use of programmed material as the sole vehicle of instruction

can generate monotony. Teachers can use the "principles" of programmed instruction in other learning modes as well - small increments of instruction with immediate feedback.

4. Reinforce success: This is such an accepted principle in educational practice that it seems platitudinous even to mention it. It might be well to look at its particular relevance when dealing with adult exceptional learners.

When students return to learning again after having been away from it for a long period of time, they look to others for judgments or evaluative statements about their performance. Usually, it is the instructors who will dispense the "reinforement" either tangibly or social reinforcement in the form of praise. But as the student begins to assume more of a learning "set" there should be a gradual movement toward self-reinforcement, the ability to acknowledge their successful effort and to feel good about it. However, exceptional learners will vary in their capacity to do this. Some exceptional learners, possibly because their anxiety level related to past failures is still high, will be unable to evaluate their performance objectively, to acknowledge its worth. They find it safer to denigrate their efforts, or to set such impossible "standards" for themselves that they cannot possibly meet them. At such times, it is probably better for teachers not to argue with the student, but simply to acknowledge the successful effort, and keep pointing out each instance of such success in the hope that eventually it can penetrate the student's perceptual system.

It is also helpful for teachers to remember that what is "reinforcing" to one adult may not be to another. If teachers use praise, it

must be given honestly and sincerely and it should be warranted.

5. Keep learning tasks and materials meaningful: There is little argument that all learning should be as meaningful as possible - that it should serve a functional purpose. Sometimes, disabled learners find it difficult to see the "meaning" or "purpose"in some of the pre-requisite tasks in reading or arithmetic skills. Teachers need to take time to point out how the present task fits in with what came "before" and to what will come "after." Students may need to be shown how an isolated task bears a relationship to a larger framework of knowledge.

While the objective of all learning is to have students generalize from what they learn and apply it to their own life experiences, exceptional learners will require some help in bridging from the immediate task to its functional application. They can be assisted to search for ways in which "working with fractional parts" can be useful in their everyday lives; or how the spelling and handwriting skills can be applied in a letter written to a relative in another part of the country.

One of the most gratifying experiences teachers can have in working with exceptional students is to witness a "breakthrough," that point when small pieces begin to fit together for a student, when something that has been a confusing jumble, now begins to make sense.

6. Facilitate remembering: Students who have had persistent difficulty with learning will often make references to their "poor memory," or their trouble with "making things stick." One of the strongest contributions a teacher can make when working with exceptional learners is to help them store and retrieve what they learn.

A number of the so-called "specialized" or "clinical" teaching methods used in working with young disabled learners involve techniques that highlight cues for perceiving small differences. Some methods focus on strengthening associations through the use of more than one sensory channel (seeing as well as hearing a particular sound).

Some material needs to be learned to the point where it is "automatic" (over-learning"). Basic addition or subtraction facts, decoding skills in work recognition are examples of this type of learning which usually implies a good deal of practice. But practice of this type is usually not very stimulating and can become drudgerous if it goes on for prolonged periods of time. Distributed practice, or spacing periods of concentrated activity with other types of learning activities has been found to be more effective in retaining information.

Another technique that can be used to help students establish a process is one called guided practice in which the student and teacher work through the steps of a problem orally with the teacher asking leading questions to guide the student. The questions are gradually faded out as the student demonstrates that he/she has understood the concept and can proceed independently.

Instructional Materials

Part of any instructional plan must make provision for instructional materials and media that are appropriate for the adult in question. While a large variety of materials are available for the non-learning disabled adult, there are fewer materials designed specifically for adults with serious learning problems. However, during the past few years, the situation is beginning to change, and there has been a

noticeable increase in remedial type materials. (Sellen, 1977) The fact that they exist does not mean that they are readily available to the teacher who wishes to use them. Financial constraints, or administrative policies may be obstacles to their immediate availability. Adult resource centers and instructional media centers can be used by teachers to become familiar with some of the newer materials, and these centers can offer helpful suggestions for permanant purchases.

In evaluating materials for their appropriateness in particular cases, one needs to keep in mind that both content organization and the method of instruction must be considered. Some materials do an excellent job of sequencing a body of content, but offer little in the way of instructional methodology for the teacher.

In the reading area, more and more materials now provide a high interest, low vocabulary loading for disabled adult readers. Reading materials are being produced which sequence word recongition skills into small, manageable instructional units for those with serious reading problems. But, other basic skills areas do not offer a similar variety of choice.

It is important to mention again that materials, regardless of how good they are, cannot be regarded as "the program" for any learner. Teachers are the agents of instruction, and the materials facilitate the process. Especially with adult exceptional learners, one should avoid the temptation to "put" the student "in a book" and turn over the responsibility of management of instruction to the piece of material. It is the teacher who decides what to select from material for instructional purposes.

Summary

There are many other topics relating to the education of adult exceptional learners that could not be treated within the scope of this small handbook. But, since this is an area in which there is likely to be continuing interest and activity, many other resources will need to be developed within the next few years. This handbook has presented a broad view, a "gestalt" of one instructional delivery system for the education of adult exceptional learners. It is a system that admittedly still requires a good deal of refinement. Some of those refinements will come as people begin to work within the framework this model proposes. It is people in the field, on the "front lines," that can provide the information that can lead to designing and delivering a more effective system.

APPENDIX AA

Description of Assessment Instruments

Individual Reading Placement Inventory, Smith, E. H. & Bradtmuller, W. G., Follet Educational Corporation, 1969, Form A; Form B. This test assesses reading ability of youth and adults up to a readability level of grade 7. It provides an independent level, an instructional level, a frustration level, and a listening comprehension level. Other skills sampled are word recognition, oral reading, and auditory discrimination. Approximate administration time: 30 minutes.

Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE), Level I, Spelling, Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, Inc., 1967. This instrument is one of the few spelling tests which requires a written response mode--spelling ability is measured by a dictation type test of 30 items. Approximate administration time: 15 minutes.

Oral Language Observation Checklist-- An informal measure designed by project staff and intended for observation of language behavior. The behaviors selected were similar to those included in Needham's Checklist (1976), and sample speaking, vocabulary, and understanding of oral language. Approximate administration time: 5 minutes.

Ayres Scale for Handwriting -- A short measure for assessing speed, letter formation, size and spacing. Student is asked to copy from a printed sheet using whatever handwriting or printing he/she uses in daily life. Approximate administration time: 5 minutes.

Independent Writing Sample -- A technique for assessing written expressive language skills in response to a picture stimulus. The picture used in the Rutgers-Plainfield project was one showing an urban street setting with adults and children interacting. Students were asked to respond with a "story" about what the picture suggested to them. No time limit was placed on completion of the story. This technique was a modification of the Myklebust Picture Story Language Test used with young children to elicit written language. Approximate administration time: 5 - 15 minutes.

Adult Basic Learning Examination(ABLE), Level I, Computation Sub-test -- A measure of arithmetic ability containing arithmetic problems in the four basic processes. Approximate administration time: 15- 20 minutes.

Related Learning Processes

Cyzyk Pre-Reading Inventory Visual Perceptual Tasks - Sub-Activities 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D were used with permission of the author Janet L. Cyzyk. The entire test is a collection of activities designed to help teachers recognize deficiencies within discrimination and perceptual skills in the visual, auditory, and perceptual motor areas that must be dealt with before an adult non-reader can begin to learn to read.

Activity 2A - The ability to perceive letter forms and the order of letters in words

Activity 2B - The ability to perceive the order of letters in words, word forms

Activity 2C - To discriminate order/sequence of letters

Activity 2D - Ability to perceive order/sequence of digits

Approximate administrative time: 10 - 15 minutes.

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude (Leland & Baker, 1967) were included for examining additional learning processes. The sub-tests selected were those applicable for use with older subjects:

Test 9 - Visual Attention Span for Objects
(visual attention ability)

Test 12 - Memory for Designs (time and space relationships, visual attentive ability, motor ability)

Test 13 - Auditory Attention Span for Related Syllables (auditory attentive ability)

Test 18 - Oral Directions (practical judgement, auditory attentive ability, visual attentive ability, motor ability)

Although these tests were used in the Rutgers-Plainfield project, they require more examiner training than the other instruments in this battery. It is suggested that teachers not try to use these tests unless they have had previous training and experience with these instruments.
Approximate administrative time: 45 minutes.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) -- A measure of global self-esteem. This instrument too, should not be administered by teachers unless they are familiar with its scoring system.

APPENDIX BB

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Oral Language Checklist

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not Apparent
I. Speaking				
1. Has difficulty making certain speech sounds.				
2. Is hesitant to speak.				
3. Speaks slowly (reduced number of words per minute).				
4. Uses incorrect word order in sentences.				
5. Has difficulty finding words needed to explain something, to name objects, or relationships ("a round thing children play with" for ball).				
6. Uses habitual expressions (e.g. "You know", "I mean. . .")				
7. Has difficulty expressing ideas.				
II. Understanding Oral Language				
1. Understands general meaning of phrase or sentence, but not the meaning of individual words.				
2. Has difficulty understanding complex sentences.				
3. Has difficulty understanding conversational language.				
4. Has difficulty recalling things you tell him/her				

III. Vocabulary:

1. Inaccurate_____
2. Meager _____
3. Accurate _____
4. Rich _____

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